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- (71) Applicants (for all designated States except US): MERCK & CO., INC. [US/US]; 126 East Lincoln Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey 07065-0907 (US). ISTITUTO DI RICERCHE DI BIOLOGIA MOLECOLARE P. ANGELETTI SPA. [IT/IT]; Via Pontina KM. 30, 600, I-00040 Pomezia (IT).
- (72) Inventors; and
- (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): LUDMERER, Steven, W. [US/US]; 126 East Lincoln Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey 07065-0907 (US). GRAHAM, Donald, J. [US/US]; 126 East Lincoln Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey 07065-0907 (US). LAFEMINA, Robert, L. [US/US]; 126 East Lincoln Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey 07065-0907 (US). FLORES, Osvaldo, A. [CL/US]; 126 East Lincoln Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey 07065-0907 (US). PIZ-ZUTI, Maura [IT/IT]; Via Pontina KM. 30, 600, I-00040
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(54) Title: HCV REPLICONS CONTAINING NS5B FROM GENOTYPE 2B

SMSYZ¹WTGALITPCGP EEEKLP I X¹PLSNSL X²RFHNKVYSTTSRSASLRAKKVTFDRVQV
LDAHYSVLQDVKRAASKVSARLLTVEEACALTPPHSAKSRYGFGAKEVRSLSRRAVNHIR
SVWEDLLEDQHTPIDTTIMAKNEVFCIDPTKGGKKPARLIVYPDLGVRVCEKMALYDIAQK
LPKAIMGPSYGFQYSPAERVDFLLKAWGSKKDPMGFSYDTRCFDSTVTERDIRTEESIYQA
CSLPQEARTVIHSLTERLYVGGPMTNSKGQSCGYRRCRASGVFTTSMGNTMTCYIKALAAC
KAAGIVDPVMLVCGDDL VVISESQGNEEDERNLRAFTEAMTRY SAPPGDLPRPEYDLELIT
SCSSNVSVALDSRGRRRYFLTRDPTTP X³TRAAWETVRHSPVNSWLGNIIQYAPTIWVRMVI
MTHFFSILLAQDTLNQNLNFEMYGAVYSVNPLDLPATIERLHGLEAFSLHTYSPHEL SRVA
ATLRKLGAPPLRAWKSRARAVRASLIAQGARA AICGRYLFNWA VKTKLKLTP LPEASRLDL
SGWFTVGAGGGDIYHSVSHARPRL LLLCLLLLSVGVGIFLLPDR

(57) Abstract: The present invention features methods for enhancing the ability of a genotype 2b NS5B sequence to function in a replicon, for producing replicons containing a functional genotype 2b NS5B, and for using replicons to measure the ability of a compound to affect HCV replication that is sustained with the genotype 2b polymerase. Also featured is a genotype 1b NS4B adaptive mutation. The ability to produce replicons containing a functional genotype 2b NS5B is illustrated by the production of chimeric replicons based on HCV genotype 1b where substantially all the NS5B sequence is replaced with a genotype 2b NS5B.